

Kyl	Nelson (FL)	Smith
Landrieu	Nelson (NE)	Specter
Leahy	Obama	Stabenow
Levin	Pryor	Stevens
Lincoln	Reid	Sununu
Lott	Roberts	Talent
Lugar	Rockefeller	Thomas
Martinez	Salazar	Thune
McCain	Santorum	Vitter
McConnell	Schumer	Voinovich
Mikulski	Sessions	Warner
Murkowski	Shelby	

NAYS—12

Boxer	Lautenberg	Reed
Dayton	Lieberman	Sarbanes
Feinstein	Menendez	Snowe
Harkin	Murray	Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Biden	Kerry
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 86, the nays are 12. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.J. RES. 87

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 12 noon on Wednesday, July 26, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.J. Res. 87, which was received from the House. I further ask unanimous consent that there be 30 minutes equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, and that following the use or yielding of time, the joint resolution be read a third time and the Senate proceed to a vote on passage without intervening action or debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

RETURNED AMERICANS PROTECTION ACT OF 2006

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 5865, which was received from the House.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5865) to amend the Social Security Act to increase the limit on payments for temporary assistance to U.S. citizens returned from foreign countries.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, recent events in the Middle East have led to the evacuation of thousands of U.S. citizens from Lebanon. This evacuation is being conducted by the U.S. State Department.

However, the Department of Health and Human Services, or more specifically, the Administration for Children and Families, ACF, is responsible for assisting U.S. citizens upon their return to the United States.

Over the past several days, ACF has established repatriation facilities at the Baltimore/Washington airport, the Philadelphia airport, and McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey. More than

5,000 Americans have been offered assistance at these facilities in recent days. Thousands more are expected within the week.

These repatriation facilities are staffed by Federal and State employees who provide assistance with travel, lodging, and access to medical facilities, as necessary. These employees are doing a tremendous job assisting all of the evacuees.

Unfortunately, under current law, this critical assistance is subject to a statutory cap of \$1 million dollars. Given the expected number of evacuees, the statutory cap could be reached at any moment. Unless Congress acts quickly to raise the cap, the ongoing repatriation efforts will be suspended. We must not allow that to happen.

The legislation I have offered today, along with my colleague from Montana, Senator BAUCUS, will raise the cap to \$6 million through the end of this fiscal year. This increase is expected to fully cover the anticipated costs of the evacuation this year, as well as provide for the continued operation of the repatriation program next year.

In addition to temporarily raising the cap, this legislation would provide the States with the option to use the National Directory of New Hires to verify eligibility under the Food Stamp Program. This language is similar to the provisions in current law now being used to verify eligibility for the SSI Program and to collect delinquent child support payments.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the utilization of this option in the Food Stamp Program would save roughly \$1 million a year, thus offsetting the cost of raising the cap.

In contrast to the legislation passed by the House yesterday, this legislation does not sunset the repatriation program. The repatriation program has been in operation, in one form or another, since the 1930s. There is no reason to believe this program should be abolished. Thus, the sunset provision contained in the House bill is merely a gimmick to create the appearance that the bill is paid for when in fact it is not.

On another matter, the House language includes a requirement for an IG report on the repatriation program. However, it does not appear such a report is necessary.

According to ACF, under the emergency repatriation program each State has an approved plan which they implement when needed. They are allowed to assume costs for all of the activities contained in their approved plan. The States then submit a detailed explanation of how the funds were spent, along with supporting documentation.

Finally, it should be noted that the language in the House bill was intended to lift the million-dollar cap for the current fiscal year. But it is not entirely clear it accomplishes that goal. Under current law, the cap is ef-

fective for fiscal years beginning after September 30, 2003. Under the House-passed language, the cap is effective for fiscal years beginning after September 30, 2006. Since the current fiscal year occurs after 2003 but before 2006, that begs the question—what is the cap for this year? The answer to this question should not be ambiguous. The Senate language clearly states the cap for the current fiscal year is \$6 million.

Given all of these concerns, I urge my colleagues to reject the House language and support the Senate alternative. The Senate alternative will maintain the critical assistance now being provided to evacuees, while at the same time offsetting the cost of this assistance in a reasonable and responsible manner.

I urge its adoption.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I urge the Senate to adopt the Grassley-Baucus amendment to the bill H.R. 5864—The Returned Americans Protection Act of 2006. This bill provides needed resources to the United States Repatriation Program, which is currently assisting U.S. citizens who are returning to United States from Lebanon.

The United States Repatriation Program was established by title XI, section 1113 of the Social Security Act to provide temporary assistance to U.S. citizens and their dependents who have been identified by the Department of State as having returned, or been brought from a foreign country to the U.S. because of destitution, illness, war, threat of war, or a similar crisis. The program is currently being used to provide assistance to citizens returning from Lebanon, but estimates indicate that the program could reach its statutory spending cap at any moment. The cap is currently \$1 million per fiscal year. We have been asked by HHS to increase the cap for fiscal year 2006 to \$6 million.

The Grassley-Baucus amendment lifts the cap for fiscal year 2006 from \$1 million to \$6 million. The amendment also includes an offset from the President's fiscal year 2006 budget to use the National Directory of New Hires, NDNH, to improve the administration of the Food Stamp Program. Access to the NDNH will help USDA verify wage and employment information on food stamp applications. That proposal was scored by CBO as providing \$11 million in savings over 10 years.

We have worked with the Department of Health and Human Services and other Government agencies in creating this legislation. We believe we have a reasonable and fiscally responsible solution to this relatively minor problem. We urge the Senate to adopt our amendment, pass the bill, and send the bill to the House for their immediate consideration.

This bill involves a small and, thankfully, seldom-used Federal program. But as recent news events have made clear, this is a program that can provide much-needed assistance to our constituents during difficult circumstances. We should not allow these

important resources to be needlessly delayed.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Grassley-Baucus substitute amendment at the desk be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 4695) was agreed to, as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. PAYMENTS FOR TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE TO UNITED STATES CITIZENS RETURNED FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

(a) INCREASE IN AGGREGATE PAYMENTS LIMIT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006.—Section 1113(d) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1313(d)) is amended by inserting “, except that, in the case of fiscal year 2006, the total amount of such assistance provided during that fiscal year shall not exceed \$6,000,000” after “2003”.

SEC. 2. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION IN THE DIRECTORY OF NEW HIRES TO ASSIST ADMINISTRATION OF FOOD STAMP PROGRAMS.

Section 453(j) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 653(j)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating the second paragraph (7) as paragraph (9); and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph

“(10) INFORMATION COMPARISONS AND DISCLOSURE TO ASSIST IN ADMINISTRATION OF FOOD STAMP PROGRAMS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—If, for purposes of administering a food stamp program under the Food Stamp Act of 1977, a State agency responsible for the administration of the program transmits to the Secretary the names and social security account numbers of individuals, the Secretary shall disclose to the State agency information on the individuals and their employers maintained in the National Directory of New Hires, subject to this paragraph.

“(B) CONDITION ON DISCLOSURE BY THE SECRETARY.—The Secretary shall make a disclosure under subparagraph (A) only to the extent that the Secretary determines that the disclosure would not interfere with the effective operation of the program under this part.

“(C) USE AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION BY STATE AGENCIES.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—A State agency may not use or disclose information provided under this paragraph except for purposes of administering a program referred to in subparagraph (A).

“(ii) INFORMATION SECURITY.—The State agency shall have in effect data security and control policies that the Secretary finds adequate to ensure the security of information obtained under this paragraph and to ensure that access to such information is restricted to authorized persons for purposes of authorized uses and disclosures.

“(iii) PENALTY FOR MISUSE OF INFORMATION.—An officer or employee of the State agency who fails to comply with this subparagraph shall be subject to the sanctions under subsection (1)(2) to the same extent as if the officer or employee were an officer or employee of the United States.

“(D) PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS.—State agencies requesting information under this paragraph shall adhere to uniform procedures established by the Secretary governing information requests and data matching under this paragraph.

“(E) REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS.—The State agency shall reimburse the Secretary, in accordance with subsection (k)(3), for the costs incurred by the Secretary in furnishing the information requested under this paragraph.”

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill (H.R. 5865), as amended, was read the third time, and passed.

JOINT MEETING OF THE TWO HOUSES—ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will stand in recess until 12 noon for a joint meeting with the Prime Minister of Iraq.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 10:40 a.m., recessed until 12 noon, and the Senate, preceded by the Secretary of the Senate, Emily Reynolds; the Deputy Sergeant at Arms, Lynne Halbrooks; the Vice President of the United States; and the President pro tempore, Mr. STEVENS, proceeded to the Hall of the House of Representatives to hear the address by Prime Minister Maliki of the Republic of Iraq.

(The address delivered by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq to the joint meeting of the two Houses of Congress is printed in the Proceedings of the House of Representatives in today's RECORD.)

At 12:02 p.m., the Senate having returned to its Chamber, reassembled and was called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

BURMESE FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.J. Res. 86, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 86) approving the renewal of import restrictions contained in the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 30 minutes of debate equally divided.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the debate from 12:30 to 6:30 this evening on energy security be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees with respect to the motion to proceed to S. 3711; provided further that following any opening remarks of the two leaders on Thursday, July 27, the motion to proceed be agreed to, and the Senate then begin the consideration of S. 3711.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADDRESS OF IRAQI PRIME MINISTER NOURI AL-MALIKI

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, before speaking on the Burmese Free-

dom and Democracy Act, I want to make a few comments about the speech of the Prime Minister of Iraq which we just had an opportunity a few moments ago to hear in the joint session over in the House Chamber.

Today we mark a step forward in the war on terror. A mere 3½ years ago, the dictator, Saddam Hussein, would have addressed his regime's legislature of lackeys. Today, the democratically elected Prime Minister of Iraq addressed a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress.

A mere 3½ years ago, the dictator, Saddam Hussein, ruled Iraq. He terrorized his own countrymen with murder, torture, and weapons of mass death. He posed a security threat to the entire region and to the United States. The international community decided he had to face serious consequences.

In March of 2003, America, as we all well know, led a multinational coalition of forces to depose the dictator and to liberate Iraq. Since then, the country has made remarkable progress as it throws off the shackles of tyranny and embraces democracy.

Iraqis have held three successful national elections, ratified a constitution, elected a permanent unity government, and formed a cabinet with a strong prime minister at its head: Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, whom we had the pleasure of hearing from just an hour or so ago.

It took our country 13 years to go from independence to the implementation of our Constitution. Iraqis have done it in 3—and under the glare of the 24-hour news cycle coverage and the threat of terrorist attacks.

When Prime Minister Maliki ascended to the podium today, it was hard to deny the importance of the moment. His presence in this Capitol represents a victory for democracy. And his country is, and will continue to be, an important ally in the war on terror. Of course, there will be many tough days ahead in Iraq. There is no denying that the security situation represents a real challenge. But America does not avoid challenges, and we do not abandon our allies when the going gets tough.

We are moving forward in Iraq. The country recently realized its highest oil production and export levels since before its liberation, and during the past 3 years, per capita income in Iraq has doubled.

I would also like to call to my colleagues' attention an article titled “Iraq as a Sovereign Nation” written by the Prime Minister that appeared in Monday's Wall Street Journal. It points to very tangible proof that Iraq is moving forward.

The Iraqi province of al-Muthanna, located at the southernmost border of that country, has become the first province in which local Iraqi forces have taken full responsibility for law enforcement and security, taking over for our coalition forces. President Bush has frequently said: As Iraqis stand up,